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Eight Workplace Safety Tips Every Employee Should Know

The safest work environments occur when employees, at all levels of the organization, work together to communicate and adhere to the safety standards set in place. Report unsafe situations and behaviors, and encourages safe practices throughout each and every work day. Here are 8 workplace safety tips every employee should know to ensure all employees are engaged in developing a safety program that encourages the shared responsibility of everyone in the workplace:

#1 Be Aware Of Your Surroundings: Every job site has inherent dangers, whether that's large, heavy machinery or tripping over items in the office. The best way to keep yourself safe is to be aware of your surroundings. The more familiar you are with your tasks and workplace, the more aware you'll be of the potential hazards. Knowing your surroundings and being aware of potential hazards will help you and your co-workers avoid unnecessary or dangerous situations.

#2 Keep Correct Posture: We've all heard that age old saying, "lift with your legs—not your back," but keeping correct posture refers to more than just employees who lift things regularly. If you work at a desk, you also need to make sure you have good posture to avoid back problems, neck pain, and even carpal tunnel. Of course, if you do have to lift things at work, be sure to keep your back straight and lift with your legs. And if you ever need to lift something you think might be too heavy, take a few extra seconds to find the mechanical aid that can help you, or lift with a partner. Whether it's a forklift or a wheelbarrow, your back is worth those extra few seconds.



#3 Take Regular Breaks: It's important that employees always take their regular breaks. OSHA has put them in place for a reason: tired workers are the most prone to an incident. The more tired you are, the less aware you are of your surroundings, and the more at risk you are for an injury. Take the breaks you're given on a regular schedule to keep yourself fresh, and try to schedule your more difficult tasks for the beginning of your shift when you're most alert.

#4 Never Take Shortcuts on Procedures: Workplace procedures exist to keep employees safe, especially those that go along with heavy machinery. It's important to always use every tool and machine you're working with according to instruction. Shortcuts lead to injury and aren't worth the small

amount of time they might save you. Be sure you're always using the right tool for the job, and using it correctly.

#5 Be Aware of New Safety Procedures: When your school purchases a new machine, or even updates training, it's important to make sure you're aware of the new safety procedures that go along with those changes. While your employer is responsible for providing the proper training, and your supervisor will make sure you're assigned to a training time, it's your responsibility to ensure you understand the new safety procedures and implement them properly before you use any new machines. Be sure to ask questions if you don't understand a safety procedure.

#6 Keep Emergency Exits Clear: Never place anything in front of an emergency exit door, even if it's only for a few minutes. While this might sound like a no-brainer, it's surprising how many ladders, boxes, and even forklifts get set in front of emergency exits. What's more, ensure pathways to equipment emergency shutoffs are clear in case something needs to be powered down immediately.



#7 Report Unsafe Conditions: The only way to stop unsafe conditions from happening is to report them to supervisors as soon as you notice them and help be part of the solution. Your supervisor is legally obligated to provide all employees with a safe working environment, and will take care of any unsafe conditions, but they have to be aware of those conditions to do so. It's important to always report any hazardous situation or unsafe condition as soon as possible, to keep yourself and other employees safe. Work together to find a solution to prevent the unsafe condition from occurring again in the future.



#8 Always Wear Personal Protective Equipment: Finally, make sure you're always wearing the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided to you by your employer. Whether it's something as small as earplugs, or something as large as a chemical suit, this PPE exists for a reason. Wearing the correct PPE for the job you're performing is just another way to keep you safe from injury.

Covid-19 Vaccine

Help stop the pandemic by getting vaccinated.

- Current authorized COVID-19 vaccines that were developed in the United States do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. So, if you get vaccinated it cannot



make you sick with COVID-19. Although there are several types of vaccines currently being offered, all of them teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus. This process can cause symptoms, such as fever. This is totally normal and a positive sign that the body is building protection against the virus.

- If you already had COVID-19 and recovered from it the CDC still recommends you get vaccinated. Currently it is unknown how long you are immune to the virus after recovering from COVID-19. Although it is rare, it is still possible that you can become infected with COVID-19. Health experts recommend you should be vaccinated even if you've already had COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is safe for pregnant women. Currently there is no evidence that the antibodies formed from the vaccine will cause any problem with pregnancy.
- After you have completed all doses of your COVID-19 vaccination you should still continue to wear a face cover and physically distance yourself from others staying at least 6 feet away. Avoid crowds, avoid poorly ventilated areas, and wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds.

Being Present in the Moment Makes You Safer

There are many things going on around us as well as distractions occupying our minds at any given time. With all of the challenges and noise we face in today's world, it is difficult to be truly present in the moment. This can be especially true at work. It is important to realize when our focus, attention, or mind is not fully present in the moment while completing a work task.

All too often we are physically present somewhere, but our focus and attention are not. We have all been there. Whether it is during a safety meeting or when driving home, we zone out and quickly realize we have no clue what was said in the meeting, or with the snap of a finger we are home but have no recollection of the drive. This kind of disconnect from the present moment can be extremely dangerous when at work.

There are many reasons why we may not be present in any given moment. As individuals, we vary greatly, but a few quick tips may help you be more in the moment the next time you find your mind wandering.

- Take note of how well you are focusing and where your mind is at. From there make the conscious choice to improve your focus and attention if needed.
- When you are part of a discussion or receiving directions make sure that you are actively listening to the person speaking. One way to become a better listener is to treat the information as

something you are going to have to teach to a coworker. Receiving information with having the expectation that you will be responsible to pass it on can help ensure that you actively listen to the person speaking.

- Eliminate distractions from the physical work area. Things such as noise, clutter, chemicals, people, equipment, etc. can have an impact on your ability to fully pay attention to what you are doing in any given moment. Eliminating distractions can make all the difference in whether or not you are able to fully focus on the task at hand.
- Eliminate any personal issues that are causing your mind to wander. Often, personal issues cause our minds to not be fully present on our work. Try to calm your concerns or worries by making a phone call home if that will help solve the issue. If a discussion will not help the situation, then maybe you need to take the rest of the day off.

It can be challenging to truly be present at work. Distractions, long hours, health issues, family problems, stress, etc. all plague us and our ability to be fully present in our work. It is only possible through recognizing where our focus and attention is directed - and from there taking the necessary steps to try to be more present in the moment.

Preventing Slips, Trips, And Falls



Slips, trips, and falls are a leading cause of injury. Thousands of disabling injuries, even deaths, occur each year as a result of slips, trips, and falls from heights, on stairs, and even at ground level. Everyone has a role in preventing these injuries. At work and at home, housekeeping is a key element.

- Keep walkways, aisles, and stairs free of tools, materials, and other hazards.
- Keep cords and power cables out of walkways.
- Place trash in the proper containers.
- Walkway maintenance is also key. Repair or report floor problems, such as missing tiles, etc.
- Block off and mark floor areas that are being cleaned or repaired.
- Walk, don't run, in general, but especially on stairs. Hold stair rails while using stairs.
- Avoid blocking your view if possible and check your path before walking.
- Do not jump on or off platforms and loading docks and stay away from edges.
- Do not carry a load you can't see over, especially on stairs or around dock edges.
- Wear appropriate footwear that is in good condition and has good tread.